

Though in memoirs intended for publication, a large share of incident and action would generally be necessary, yet there are some men whose mental history alone might be very interesting to reflective readers; as, for instance, that of a thinking man, remarkable for a number of complete changes of his speculative system. From observing the usual tenacity of views once deliberately adopted in mature life, we regard as a curious phenomenon the man whose mind has been a kind of caravansera of opinions, entertained awhile, and then sent on pilgrimage; a man who has admired and dismissed systems with the same facility with which John Buncl^e found, adored, married, and interred, his succession of wives, each one being, for the time, not only better than all that went before, but the best in the world.* You admire the versatile aptitude of a mind, sliding into successive forms of belief, in this intellectual metempsychosis by which it animates so many new bodies of doctrines in their turn. And as none of those dying pangs which hurt you in a tale of India, attend the desertion of each of these speculative forms which the soul has awhile inhabited, you are extremely amused by the number of transmigrations, and curious to see what is to be the next; for you never reckon on the present state of such a man's views, as to be for permanence, unless perhaps when he has terminated his course of believing everything, in ultimately believing nothing. Even then, unless he be very old, or feel more pride in being a sceptic, the conqueror of all systems, than he ever felt in being the champion of one, even then, it is very possible he may spring up again, like an igneous vapour from a bog, and glimmer through new mazes, or retrace his course through half of those he went errant through before. You will observe, that no respect is attached to this Proteus of opinion, after his changes have been multiplied; as no party expect him to remain with them, or account him

* John Buncl^e is the hero of a fantastic book, "The Life of John Euncle, Esq., containing various observations and reflections made in several parts of the world, and many extraordinary revelations." He is said to be the representative of his author, Thomas Amory (1691-1789), an eccentric person of whose history little is known. "John," says Leigh Hunt, "is a kind of innocent Henry the Eighth in private life, without the other's fat, fury, and solemnity. He marries seven wives, whom he disposes of by the lawful process of fever and small-pox."